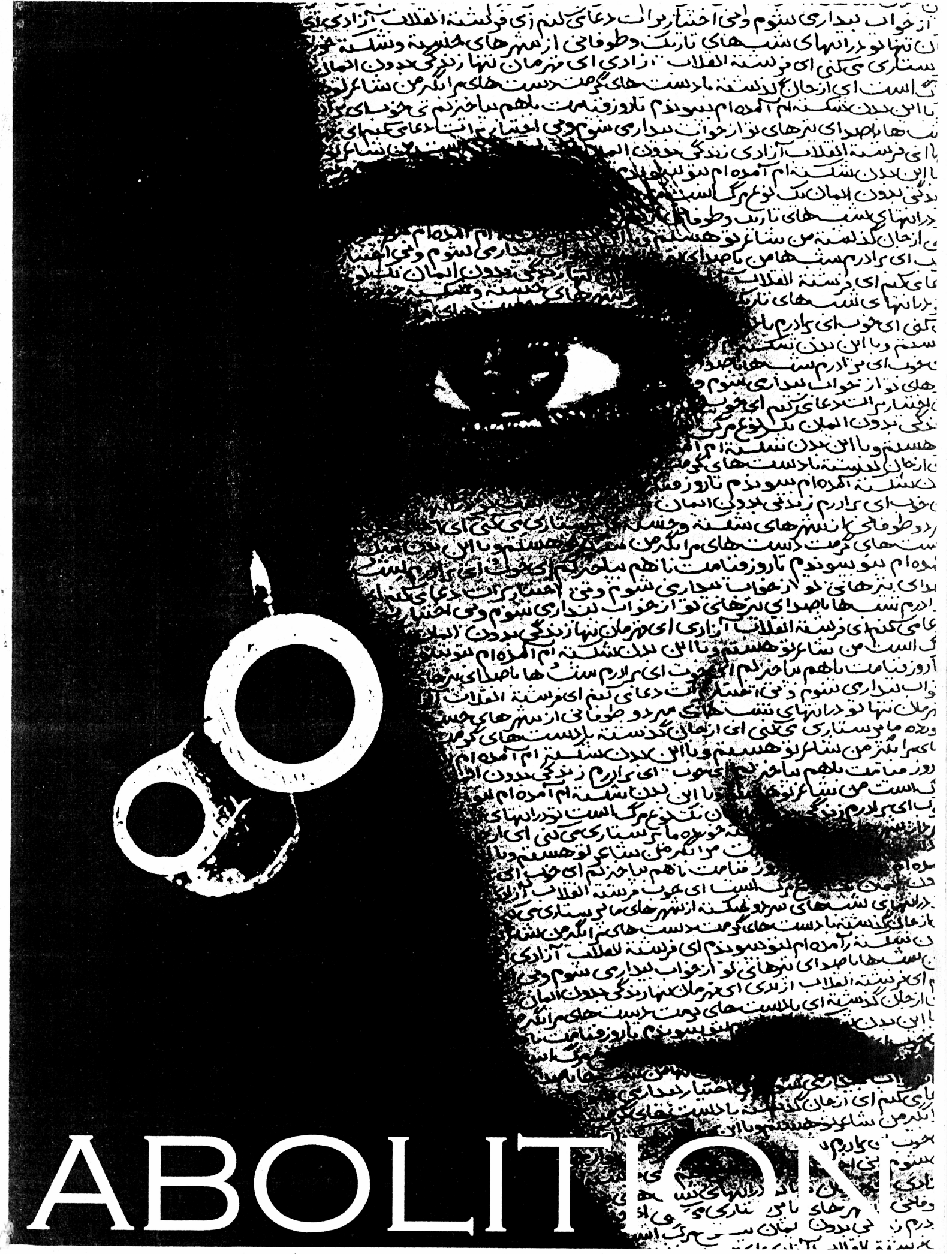

ABOLITION

ABOLITION ISSUE ONE AUGUST 2001

Shout outs go to ;
All contributors -this is your work, Matt Convey,Donna whose help and encouragement made this happen, Kate for the Artwork, Mick & Mitch, Justice Action for daring to talk straight, all the people from the doing time show 5:00 Mondays, Listen in!
All people inside and out working toward prison abolition worldwide.
In Solidarity and friendship, Bart.

The artwork on the cover of this issue is used without the consent of the Artist, Shirin Neshat. It is titled "faceless".
All work appearing with in is the author's own, and does not reflect the opinions of myself or contributors. The authors retain all rights regarding their work.

ABOLITION is a community forum, if you have anything to contribute please feel free to contact us;

ABOLITION
PO BOX 700
BRUNSWICK LWR.
VIC.3056

We are completely unfunded, we don't ask for money for the magazine and we don't want to. However, if you want to send us any cash to cover costs....

For copies of ABOLITION send stamps or a self addressed envelope to the above address. This publication is free for prisoners.

CONTRIBUTORS to issue one are ; Matt Convey, Donna Parsons, Craig Minogue and Phyllis Crawcour, they can be contacted through ABOLITION.

G'day and welcome what hopefully be the first of many issues of *ABOLITION*. This publication is dedicated to the cause of helping draw attention the insanity of the Australian and hence world wide prison systems. It is dedicated to those of us who have been incarcerated by the state for whatever reason and is a vehicle to try to eleviate the suffering of people trapped in state institutions. At the same time Abolition will hopefully also work as a medium against incarceration on a wider front. We aim to disparage all form of coercion and violence perpetrated by the state in all it many different guises.

We on the outside cannot let those on the inside be forgotten, the struggle for prison abolition is paramount to the struggle for any kind of genuine social change, if we think for a second that that we can change this system without dealing with the ideas of crime and punishment, than we are in for a real shot up the arse. Let me clarify myself here as this point is central to Abolition, not everyone in jail is a victim of his/her circumstance, there are people in this society (and any future society for that matter) who have no respect for their life and the life and freedom of others, and they are as much enemies of the community as are the cops or screws of anyone else, and we should fight them aswell. I am just an individual I cannot change anything without your help, just as you without mine, I don't know answers, I'm still working out what the questions are.

Prison is central to this system staying in control, it is the state's ultimate threat and punishment to those who resist them or break their taboo's, we cannot ignore this. It must be addressed first. To merely remove the label of prisoner from our vocabulary is not addressing anything, we have to change the concepts of accountability. Nowadays when some commits a crime against her/his community they are locked away, shunned and further removed from the society that has already partially ostracized them. By futher rejecting an individual who is already feeling left out by the rest of the world all we are doing as a society in confirming the suspicion they hold that no-one cares for them, and that people are equally not worth caring about. By punishing people for the mistakes of the masses we create the mold of 'criminal' for people to slip into, for the rest of the community to fear. Hence by a simple tactic of divide and conquer the entire population is scared into the existing power structures. We let ourselves both individually and collectively fall into the roles of victim, criminal and god fearing citizen so easily, and why? Because it is easy and convenient to do so. By switching off our hearts and minds and placing faith in the system we can kid ourselves that everything is sweet and concentrate on the shitty jobs we are pushed into to make ends meet.

If it is so easy for us to assume these roles than it is equally simple for us to reject them. It is as simple as evolution, we will simple evolve out of these mind sets and leave them in the ashes of state centric society. This is not to say that this 'evolution' is simply going to happen by proclaiming to be so, quite the contrary, it must embraced and advocated and fought for, the ruling powers and all their hangers-on and shitmen won't give us our collective freedom on a silver platter and humbly apologies, they'll fight tooth and nail to hang onto their power, I mean they have divised a system of governance they is completely engineered to their needs, so why would they give it up like a child with a toy.

That's what I want to this to be a collection of peoples writing, a collection of warcries and battlehyms, an epitaph for those who have lost their lives and freedom, and hopefully the picture of a bright future written and divised by us for us. This is just another chance for contact between those of us trapped in jail and those of us outside, the only thing this can be if it is to succeed is a forum for your words and a place where we can all read anothers work and learn from it, if you disagree with this or anything you read herein, write to me!, fucking tell me and everyone else why you disagree! Thankyou for reading, your support and interest is the only thing that keeps this going.

Forced labour at Barwon Prison: a brief history of a refusal to work for Colorific Australia

by Craig W.J. Minogue © 1999

On 21 January 1999 at Barwon Prison I was ordered to work in prison industries, I refused this order and the first stage of my punishments, called the "Sacked Regime" began. I was to be locked in the cell for 20 hours a day for a 14-day period, normally I am locked in for 12 hours. I suffered restricted access to telephone calls, including those to lawyers and courts, I was placed on a restricted canteen spend and certain programmes activities were also curtailed.

On 25 January as the second stage of my punishments I was ordered to move to a doubled-up cell with a fellow who was also on the Sacked Regime, this fellow had 9 days of his sentence to serve, at that time I had 17 years to serve. I refused this order and I was placed in a holding cell and transferred to the Acacia Security Unit. The word "security" is a prison euphemism for punishment.

Continuing with legal preparations under these circumstances, the doubled-up cell, would have been impossible and I would have been reduced in my cell property allowance from 100 points to 75 points in a doubled-up cell which would have again impacted upon my ability to continue preparations of my ongoing legal matters. (A book is worth 1 point and a computer and printer is worth 40, power board 10 points, shoes 10 points, bedding 10 points).

In protest at my situation I went on a hunger strike when I was sent to the punishment unit. I remained on the strike for 19 days.

As a result of my refusing the above orders the third and fourth stages of my punishments were imposed. I was charged with prison offences, inevitably I was found guilty and given a reprimand, fined $50 and I lost contact visits for 28 days. When unemployed, as I was at this stage, I normally receive $10 per week prison wages, and on occasion I receive $100 private money per month, all of which I use to buy toiletries, stamps and phone credits. A $50 fine represents 5 weeks wages and 2 weeks private money entitlements so it equates to a fine of thousands of dollars.

On the afternoon of 28 January I was advised that I would be in Acacia Unit for 1 more week. On the morning of 29 January I made a Supervisors request to "have access to my legal documents, computer, printer, software and stationary necessary for the ongoing preparation of my legal matters." I explained that I had an "appeal hearing before the Federal Court on 9 February I and that I need to continue to work on that matter." (This was in relation to one of my human rights test cases).

On 1 February I met with Operations Manager Trevor Craig in the Unit office to discuss my continuing hunger strike. I advised him of my outstanding Supervisors request and that I was told I had to go through a Supervisor with a request before I could see a Manager. I mentioned that my request was in relation to access to documents and computer and he said I would have to go through the Unit Supervisor first.

preforming work in prison has no entitlement to compensation under WorkCover.'

So WorkCover does not have jurisdiction and the State Government has taken away the common law right to sue ones employer, not that I am "employed" anyway, so who has jurisdiction if a prisoner is injured whist working a machine or driving a forklift? The answer of course is no-one.

I am forced to work against my will. I am then paid a small gratuity for that forced labour, which is then promptly taken away from me by the people who pay it, because I have to buy food,[1] bedding, footwear and toiletries.

I will not go into great detail about the injustice associated with the issues of no sick pay, no workers' compensation, no holiday pay and other entitlements. And I will not here go into the effect of the 12,000 borderline sexual assaults that are committed at Barwon prison every year under the guise of strip-searching; 1200 of which are carried out when Colorific's prisoners are marched to and from prison industries![2]

In a letter dated 25 May 1999 to Mr Peter Nemaric who is the Industries Manager at Barwon prison, I wrote and formally informed him that I do not want to be forced to work in prison industries for Colorific Australia. I went on to tell Mr Nemaric that I only attend prison industries under the direct threat of many punishments if I refuse.

I am forced to work under threat of punishment with materials owned by a private company, on a machine owned by a private company, and I produce consumer goods for the profits of a private company, and I am forced to meet production quotas set by the company. Simply put, I am in a state of servitude to the private company and I am being exploited and real job are lost in the community.

I am not learning any vocational skills, work ethic or anything else that will be of any use to me in the year 2016 when I am released at 53 years of age. I am simply wasting my time in the glorified chook-pen of prison industries.[3]

NOTES:

1, Between 1 November 1996 and 1 Febuary 1997 the following food items were sold to the 240 prisoners who were at Barwon Prison: 3189 tins of fish, 1959 bags of rice, 1873 packets of noodles, 1238 tins of baked beans and spagetti, 1217 dozen eggs, 685 tins of tomatoes, 518 bags of pasta, 274 bottles of pineapple and orange juice, 273 tomato paste twin packs, 233 tins of fruit, 218 bottles of chilli sauce, 161 boxes of cereal, 136 boxes of salada biscuits, 114 bottles of cooking oil and 102 boxes of Cuppa soup. (There was more but space is limited).

The kitchen budget at the time of these figures was $420,000,00 per year, at the same time the inmates spent $120,000,00 per year on food. To appreciate the above figures they need to be extenede to a twelve month period, and than take note of the weights. Two examples: 1) There were 12,756 One hundred and thirty gram tins of fish sold per year, which is 1,658 kgs of fish: and 2) There were 7,836 five hundred gram bags of rice sold per year which is 3918 kgs of rice. When cooked the rice increases in weight by at least 50%. This means that prisoners are supplying themselves with at least 6 tonnes of rice per year at Barwon prison. I am sure that, throughtout Australia, prisoner shops and canteens make millions of dollars from this trade in food.

2, These figures were released to Ms. Judy Cox of Essendon Community Legal Centre Inc. as part of an FOI application made to the Department of Justice (Victoria). See letter to Ms. Cox from Francis Cataldo, the FOI manager, dated the 8th of Febuary 1996.

3, In days gone by prisoners were corralled in fenced of ares that prisoners and staff called chook pens. Little has changed, it just "appears" better now and at least you can kid yourself that it's better than the "D" division yards which were condemned in 1898 as not fit for human habitation, but which were used until the late 1990's.

On 1 and 2 February at about 8:00am, I reminded Unit staff that I need the request of 28 January to be dealt with. In the afternoon of 2 February I met with Supervisor Norman and he advised me that as part of my punishment:

> "Management had decided that you would not be able to have access to your legal documents or computer equipment whilst you were in Acacia Unit."

I advised Mr Norman that I had materials on my computer that I needed for court on 9 February and that I also need access to documents.

I eventually received access to my legal documents, computer and printer after the intervention of Community Centre lawyers on my behalf and after a phone call to the Australia Government Solicitor who was representing the Commonwealth Attorney-General in the Constitutional matter that I had brought before the Federal Court of Australia and in which the appeal hearing was set for 9 February.

To participate in the proper process of the law in this day and age one needs access to the facilities to prepare documents for court. To refuse access to the tools to use in court is the same as not allowing me to attend and defend myself or to put my case in a matter I bring before the courts.

Impeding my access to the courts as part of my punishment for refusing to work for Colorific Australia in prison industries was, I am sure, seen as standard operating procedure for prison authorities and one which Colorific willingly turn a blind eye too.

The right of unimpeded access to the courts is the most fundamental of all human and legal rights in our society. It is this right that guarantees that all people can be protected by the rule of law and it should not be conditional on working in the forced labour camp of prison industries for a private company.

As a result of the hunger strike I had discussions with prison management and they agreed to put me in a single cell, but I had to agree to work in prison industries for Colorific Australia. I could have easily remained on the hunger strike, but the resulting physical condition made me vulnerable so I had to start to eat again. If I had refused to work for Colorific Australia I would stayed in Acacia Unit and therefore I would have continued on the strike and...

The *Corrections Act* 1986 compels prisoners to work when ordered to do so. Under the cover of a letter dated 18 May 1999 I wrote to the WorkCover Authority (Victoria) and asked:

> 'If I injure myself at work in a prison industry am I covered by WorkCover? Can I make a claim like any other worker?'

Although I am forced to work for the profits of a private company in prison workshops, John Vitorson the Manager of the WorkCover Advisory Service, in a letter dated 10 June 1999 (his ref 99/1370), I was advised:

> 'In accordance with the section 5 of the *Accident Compensation Act* 1985 prisoners are not workers as there is no contract of service and no worker/employer relationship. Accordingly, a prisoner injured while

GOVERNMENT CONSPIRACY OR PARANOID DELUSION??

It started in the 1980's with the Red-light Cameras. "A necessary measure" or so they said. Those who spoke out against the cameras were labeled "alarmists" or "fear-mongers"; after all there was "nothing insidious about photographically recording evidence of traffic violations". Well they didn't stop there did they? For reasons of "security" and "public safety", cameras started going up everywhere - railway stations, shopping centres, trains, buses, and street corners; in fact camera surveillance is now an unavoidable fact of our daily lives. We are watched, monitored and recorded almost everyplace we go. Sometimes the cameras are obvious, sometimes they are hidden, but always we are being watched for our "safety" and protection".

However, who is watching the watchers?

Remember when the government tried to introduce the Australia Card? Again this was back in the 1980's, but unlike the Red-light Cameras, they didn't get away with it - OR DID THEY? For those who don't remember the Australia card was proposed as a compulsory form of national ID that would have been needed to gain employment, obtain social security benefits etc., and you would have to produce it on demand if requested by the authorities. While the proposal was scrapped and freedom loving people nationwide breathed a collective sight of relief - BIG BROTHER had been defeated. Sure about that? What then, is a tax file number? Isn't it just a toned down version of the Australia Card? Sure you don't have to produce it on demand if you are stopped by police but you still need it for just about everything else these days. However, we are told not to worry as our Tax File Numbers are 'confidential'. Like all our other 'confidential' info the government has on us? The stuff that is made available to law enforcement and corporate data-bases world wide?

Ever been stopped on the street by police and asked to produce your ID? It's not enough that the bastards are already filming you with "security cameras' or that every time you do the shopping or go to the bank you leave an electronic trail that the authorities and their corporate benefactors can trace at the push of a button, no we still have to be reminded by our corporate police states' hired uniformed goons that they are calling all the shots and we are nothing but powerless bit players in a nationwide closed circuit TV/Computer monitored Reality Drama that we didn't even chose to be in!

IT'S NOT A CRIME TO THINK-YET!!!@@@@

The following poetry comes from the pen of Donna Parsons…

TIME

Time stands still in the jail I'm in
Nothing seems to get done within
Ay 8 am they call the call
And watch the prisoners run
To get their medication
Needed for the day

At half past eight
They call again
To let us know the time
It is the last call
If you don't go
You'll miss out for the day

This back of mine
Oh how I whine
For something to be done
Yet as I wait
It is too late
No one gives a damn

The day foes by
We sit and cry
Waiting for a nurse
To call us up
For an appointment made
Some two weeks before

The doctors well
What can I say
Do not know how to cope
With all the stress
Within this place
There is little hope

Another days is over agian
But what else can we do
Just sit and watch
That TV show
That no-one wants to see

The aches, the pains
That we all have
We suffer more and more
Long duration of spasmodic pain
That medical can't cure

The changes of rules
We hear all day
No-one seems to care
From one day on
They are too long
Time just carries on

How long is it before we leave
No-one seems to know
We sit and cry
As days go by
Hoping to be free

This place where in
Is hell within
But it never is to late
One day we'll get
Up to that door
And leave by the gate

The day is here
It's time to go
Thank god I can still walk
With heads held high
For now we all can talk

This place called jail
Is just a living hell
No-one should go there
My words to you
Think before you do
Something to send you there

The following poem has already appeared previous issue of the Melbourne ABC bulletin, yet despite its poignancy and relevance seems to have happened.

WHAT KIND OF REVOLUTION IS THIS?

Cynical, Elitist
Snobbish Cliques
Intellectual Nazis
Arrogant Shits
Squabbling, procrastinating
Inactive Pricks
What kind of fucking revolution is this?

REVOLVING DOOR SYSTEM

Processed like cattle then onto the truck
Fodder for the system-no one gives a fuck
Enemies of society, out of sight and sound
Screws do as they please, paid to keep us down
Rotting away in cells, wandering 'round the yards
A useless fucking existance,staring through the bars
Some of us got months, some of us got years
You lock away the 'criminals',
But still you live in fear
Treat us like oucasts, treat us like a plague
Is it any wonder so many choose to stay?
Revolving door system running at a profit
Money to be made thats why they'll never stop it....

13 HOURS OF INSANITY

Cannot keep things clear in focus
My mind is awash with parnoid psychosis
Claustrophobia - walls closing in on me
Cannot deal with this harsh negativity
I always laugh but I don't feel happy
My mind is sick, in need of therapy
Alone in a cell for thirteen hours
Just me, the TV, a toilet and a shower

MATT CONVEY
PT. PHILLIP PRISON .
1999

COMING TO JAIL
OR
EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON

A funny subject to write about, but one that's very relevant to me now.

I firmly believe that everything happens for a reason. We may not know what it is at the time, but usually somewhere along the track the reason is revealed to us.

I couldn't understand the reason how twelve perfect strangers, who'd only viewed me for a short time could hold my future in their hands and ultimately have me sentenced to three years jail. None of it made any sense to me and my faith in the justice system quickly disappeared.

Once brought to Deer Park Women's Prison, I was faced with so many dilemmas and obstacles. I was coming to virgin's territory, and at sixty years of age, was I going to be a target of rapes, bashings and stand-over tactics? How was I going to face the separation from the man I dearly loved and had been married to for 42 years.

Knowing nothing about jail politics and the pecking order was I going to be able to fit in. I was so traumatised and terrified for my life, that I became very withdrawn and depressed, staying in my room (never calling it a cell) and not even trying to socialize.

For me one of the greatest challenges I was confronted with came four months after being imprisoned. Where I was living, I was continually being badgered daily by one of the 'heavies' in here for being stuck-up and unsociable. Even when I tried sitting with her to watch TV, she would call me a lazy bitch.

I put up with her ridicule for four months. But one day she caught me when I was feeling very low and depressed and this time when she started on me I answered her back. This took her by surprise and before long we were in for a fully fledged verbal fight. Then she started to walk toward me with her fists clenched and I knew I was in for a belting. I asked her to stop for a moment so I could take off my glasses before she hit me , and for some reason this struck her as funny and she roared with laughter, which resulted in the tension being broken. She came over to am and said "For an old girl you've got real guts taking me on" I found out later no one had ever stood up to her or answered her back and her word was gospel.

From that day on she became my mentor in a sense, teaching me the ways of jail life and instructing me on how to cope with my loss of freedom. It started me thinking how was I best able to get through my three years in here and how could I turn my adversity into an advantage.

I slowly gained the trust and respect of the young girls in here - not an easy thing to accomplish believe me, as most were street kids and heavily addicted to drugs and knew nothing of family

life. But I became "Mummy" to these girls, would give them cuddles and kiss away their tears - listen to their problems, give advice when asked for, but mostly I just let them pour their hearts out the clear their cluttered minds. As a result of this, Managment saw fit to have me train with the Adolescent Women's Health Resource as a Peer Support Worker and this work with new receptions especially has given me so much gratification and fulfillment. I fully well understand the emotions of loss, shock, disbelief they suffer having traveled that same path unaided when I first arrived here.

Each day was a new beginning for me and I could feel myself growing emotionally and mentally. I was actually taking time out to find who and what I actually was. I began to like myself, my self esteem and confidence grew and my attitude became extremely positive. I'd at last found a 'niche' for myself in the pecking order of jail life.

I've found that in the strangest places you come across God's magic. For me watching cloud formations fascinate me in the shapes and how quickly they change and I know they are God's magic. I realise now also, that if there were no clouds in my life I could be shallow and selfish and never know how dearly I'm loved by my family and friends, or how they are supporting me with prayer and care.

One of the things I do know is that jail does not "REHABILITATE" you. It only locks you away and takes away your freedom - nothing more.

No one in their right mind would voluntarily want to come to jail, but for me its been a learning and growing experience and I know I'm a changed person for the better. I've defiantly turned my adversity into my advantage and in some small way I'm grateful for the experience and betterment I've gained in jail.

The future for my husband and myself in our retirement years has utterly taken a new direction from the one we would have normally led, had we both not been incarcerated, my husband receiving a one year sentence as an accessory to my crime. He can fully well appreciate what I've faced, having traveled the same journey to a lesser degree.

Neither of us has any bitterness in the unjust way the judicial system treated us and now we both full realise that "EVERYTHING DOES HAPPEN FOR A REASON". We are going to capitalize on our joint experiences during the journeys we've been on and pass on to many needy ex-offenders and their families these experiences and hope it brings betterment into their lives.

PHYLLIS CRAWCOUR (Mrs)
June 2001

Frustrated Access to Educational Programmes

A Report Compiled by Craig Minogue

© Craig Minogue 1999

Why should prisoners be allowed to educate themselves?

Prisoners should be directed in education and not exploited in Prison Industries. They should, because for a prisoner, especially a long term prisoner, to have the best chance of not re offending upon release is for that person to have opportunities to do something with their lives, to have an enlightened and educated view of the world and their place in it. This would be beneficial to everyone concerned especially the community. And the community should appreciate that it has a vested interest in educating its imprisoned citizens and helping those people find the right path, not simply exploiting them as commercial fodder in slave labour industries.

In 1997 the Public Correctional Enterprise, know by its acronym"CORE", started to make a lot of noise about actually doing something other than warehousing people. So after a lot of thought I decided to ask for assistance from CORE management in relation to gaining long term benefits from my sentence.

I decided to go to a Review and Assessment Committee ("R&A") meeting and ask for assistance to gain access to educational programs. R&A Committee's make recommendations as to the placement of a prisoner and as to what programs a prisoner can participate in. My efforts were met with uncertainties and bumbling inaction by CORE executive, Barwon prison management, Sentence Management staff at the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner. The TAFE staff at Barwon did not assist me either. I went to CORE management cap-in-hand on two occasions and I was turned away on both occasions. I have not been helped, only hindered, in gaining access to educational programs.

Full time education, the first attempt

My minimum sentence is an effective 30 years, so I did not think it would be asking too much for CORE management to assist me in making productive use of my time in their institution. In order to do this I lodged an Application for full time education (Off - Campus University Studies) via a letter dated 1 September 1997 addressed to the Chairperson of the R&A Committee at Barwon prison. In that letter I wrote:

> I have been in prison since 1986 and that my release date is in the year 2016. The first seven years of my imprisonment were consumed by legal matters. Since 1992 I have very much focussed my time on working in prison industries; I have worked in the Print Shop and the Formed Wooden Products Plant at Pentridge. I have also worked in prison industries in Barwon and I have always received good work reports. Since 1993 I have completed 73 units of educational and personal development programmes. I have also worked as the librarian at the Barwon Prison Education Centre.
>
> I have been in CORE's Barwon prison since January 1994, during this time I have worked as a billet in both Diosma and Eucalypt Units. I have worked closely with staff, and within CORE's Unit Management structure. My unit and work reports are all 'excellent'. I have actively participated in, and initiated programmes' activities since having been in Barwon. However, I have recently directed my focus much more towards educational pursuits.
>
> I have just completed the first unit of a Bachelor of Arts, literary major, at Deakin University. I would very much like to devote myself to full time University studies in 1998. My goal is to start with the following units of study:
>
> > Literary Processes A; Literature and Modernity B - Literature Modernism; Religious Experience A and B. These units require a full time commitment as they consist of 6 assignments and 2 exams a semester.
>
> In order that I be able to commit myself to this course of study, I need to know what my position is in relation to full time education, and when I can take up that position. I am required to enrol for the 1998 Academic Year by the end of September 1997.

I then had discussions with Mr Langenberg, the Education Centre Head of Department, and we agreed on what he was offering, my responsibilities as a student and his monitoring role. Mr Langenberg advised me that there was a position available and I could start straight away.

I expressed one concern that I asked R&A to address. That being that I would not like to commit myself to a full year of study only to find that at the times that the Education Centre is closed as I could be drafted to work in the prison industries. I indicated that I would be seeking reassurance from the R&A Committee that before I commit myself I will be given the opportunity to fulfil my commitment to the course of study.

I would have been very disheartened if I were forced to withdraw from a unit of study because I was required to work a press in the factory. Due to the amount of study I plan to undertake, I will require a full year to prepare and complete it successfully, not just the times the Education Centre is open.

I then had a second meeting with Mr Langenberg and the criteria on which my application had previously been approved had changed and that there was now some question as to when I could start at full time education.

I had discussions with my Unit Supervisor, a Mr Mazengarb, and my case worker Mr A Zehmeister. After my meeting with Mr Zehmeister, I wrote a letter formalising our conversation. In this letter dated 3 September, 1997 I said in part:

> I feel as if there is a large measure of ambiguity surrounding decisions connected with my sentence management. I feel as if decisions are deliberately left open so people can change their minds at a later date, this is especially true of "management". Because of this I like to write things down so there can be no misunderstandings. With this in mind I would like to jot down a few points from our discussion.
>
> (1) That the full time education (Off - Campus University Studies) category, is as a rule, offered to students doing two or more university units;
>
> (2) That Mr Langenberg is generally concerned that prisoners may try to rort the system to get more free time than they are entitled to;
>
> (3) That Mr Langenberg's position is that I could not start full time education until the Education Centre opened in the new year.
>
> I do not want to be seen to be challenging the general rules, but ask that I be managed as an individual. I suggest that my IMP file will support that I have headed down the education path since 1993, and that when one considers how long I have been in prison, and how long I have to serve, it would be beneficial if I were to be individually managed.
>
> I am a self-motivated person and am not looking to "rort free time" (*whatever that means*). What I am asking is that I be able to enter into an individual management agreement with my case worker which would allow for me to:
>
> > Be categorised as full time education (Off- Campus University Studies) from 1 November 1997 so as to complete this year's study and prepare for next years commitments;

Be at the Education Centre from 1 November 97 (there is a position available) or in the unit;

Be responsible to my case worker from the close of the Education Centre in 1997 to the start of the education year in early 1998; and

Be given more responsibility not less.

This letter was received well by Mr Zehmeister and he continued to support me. On the evening of 4 September 1997 Mr Langenberg attended at my cell in the company of Prison Officer Walsh. Mr Langenberg advised me that there had been a "further mistake" and he was no longer willing to support my application for a position as a full time student as I did not fit the criteria. Mr Langenberg advised me that I did not fit the criteria because I had not previously been enrolled as a part-time student at the Barwon Education Centre. I asked if the part time study I had competed at Deakin could be taken into consideration, he said they could not.

In a letter dated 4 September, 1997 I again wrote to the Chairperson of the R&A Committee at Barwon prison under the heading of Application for Full Time Education (Off -Campus University Studies), I said in part:

Over the last four days I have had three discussions with Mr Langenberg of the Barwon Education Centre in relation to becoming a full-time student. At first Mr Langenberg said there was a position available and that I could start straight away; he in fact signed a reclassification form stating he supported my application. The next day Mr Langenberg informed me that he had "made a mistake", and that I could not start until the Education Centre opened at the beginning of 1998 because I was currently only studying one University unit. Finally Mr Langenberg advised me that I did not fit the criteria at all.

I did not bother attending the scheduled R&A meeting because of an overwhelming feeling of despondency.

On 8 September 1997 I met with Ms G. Eaton, the Executive officer of Barwon prison, and handed her a full copy the file in this matter and requested that she look into it. I asked her to see if some arrangement could be made whereby I can do full time education (University Studies) without the hindrance of the Education Centre.

I did not receive a response. I did not hear back from Ms Eaton, nor have I been advised of the outcome of the R&A meeting. I attempted to speak with Mr Poyner, who chaired the meeting, and ascertain his thoughts on the matter shortly after the meeting was held; but frankly it would be simpler to pin down a bowl of quivering gelatine.

After a decade in custody it has become clear to me that the only worthwhile and constructive path available to me is educational pursuits. However, when I decided to commit myself towards full-time education, I was fearful that there would be procrastination, ambiguity and weak-willed indecision that would frustrate my endeavours. My fears have been confirmed and for a time optimism was lost.

For many years I have not attended CORE's R&A or the Annual Classification reviews because I feel that the procedure is confronting and demeaning. However, I had decided to make an effort and attend an R&A meeting for assistance and guidance, but this has all been in vain. Up to 1999 I ever been advised of a "Classification Plan", I have only ever been told: "We will see you in 3, 6 or 12 months" this coupled with the events detailed above in relation to my efforts to gain assistance to undertake educational programs, make it obvious to me that there is nothing sentence management, prison management, or the Education Centre at Barwon will do to assist me. I wrote to the General Manager of Barwon prison and detailed all of the above, but I did not receive a response. This whole situation is indicative and representative of CORE's perpetual failures as managers.

Of course these were not the only problems I experienced with gaining access to education in prison. While I was battling to get support from the prison managers I was going ahead with study, well, I was trying to. I had so much difficulty in gaining access to the course material sent to me by my university that I decided to defer a year of study.

In the month before I was due to start study in 1998 I spent over 2700 words in letters, complaints and forms simply trying to gain access to a dozen audio tapes that Deakin had sent. I spent over 600 words on letters just so I would be able to receive hard covered books on loan from the Deakin Library. A fellow Deakin student here carried the full burden of the campaign in relation to the hard covered book issue and wrote many letters to Deakin university, prison authorities and others. I did almost as much work on just being able to do the study than the study itself entailed.

I kept a log of all the problems I had in gaining access to the tapes. I spoke with unit staff on 7 occasions, the unit supervisor on 20 occasions, the Governor on 4 occasions (and 3 of those were when I waylaid him), the property officer on 4 occasions and the unit supervisor spoke with the Governor on 4 occasions and to the Manager of the Education Centre on 2 occasions in relation to me receiving the tapes. In a punishment unit, like Acacia, when one is locked in a cell for 22 hours a day, 95% of this contact would not be possible. If I had the tape problems in a management unit it would take 3 or 4 months to resolve, and apart from that, it is not possible for me to borrow a tape player like I could in the mainstream units because I don't have the cell points. (Cell property is allocated points up to a total of 100, a computer and printer is 40 points, a pair of shoes is 5 points, a pillow is 5 points and a book is 1 point).

If prisoners cannot have a guaranteed flow of books and other educational material then they really cannot undertake any formal course of study. At Barwon, I have gone so far as to hide books when staff search the cell daily. As much as possible I try to keep my books out of sight; it reminds me of when people buried their glasses in Cambodia to escape persecution from Pol Pot's thugs for being intellectuals.

Chronology of the 1998 problems

For the 1998 academic year I was enrolled as a full time student (off-campus) in *Literary Studies* and '*Comparative Studies in Art Science and Religion.*' On the afternoon of Friday 16 January 1998 I received the course materials for my *Literary Studies* unit and a property receipt advising that 3 audio tapes, which had been enclosed with the printed material, had been placed in my property.

On the afternoon of Friday 16 January 1998 I spoke with Unit Supervisor, a Mr Mazengarb, who advised me that he thought the Security Manager Mr T Craig had intervened in my access to the University course material and that he would speak to Mr Craig on Monday 19 January. On 19 January I requested to speak with Mr Craig and that request was entered in the Unit's Requests/Complaints Register.

On the morning of Monday 19 January 1998, I approached Mr Craig in the compound area at 8.30 a.m. and asked if I could speak with him in relation to the problems associated with my Deakin University course material. He said that he would speak with me later in the day. Mr Craig then attended the accommodation unit at 8.30 a.m. but left without speaking with me.

At 9.00 a.m. I took the opportunity to talk with Unit Supervisor Mr Mazengarb who advised me that Mr Craig had told him that as I was not going through the Education Centre to do my studies, then the tapes would have to go via the Education Centre staff to be issued to me. I advised Mr Mazengarb that this did not make very much sense and that I still needed to talk with Mr Craig. Mr Mazengarb advised that Mr Craig would return at 9.00 a.m. and speak with me.

On 19 January 1998 at 10.50 a.m. I requested Mr Mazengarb to telephone Mr Langenberg, Head of Department, Barwon Prison Education Centre and ask when he would issue the Deakin tapes to me. The answer was that Mr Langenberg would "Let you know."

On the afternoon of 19 January at 3.35 p.m. Mr Craig attended the unit and I spoke with him in relation to my course materials from Deakin University. Mr Craig told me that there was "a policy of not accepting pre recorded tapes into the prison for security reasons." I ask why this was, Mr Craig said it was because they did not know where the tapes were from and what was on them.

I advised Mr Craig that the tapes came from the Off-Campus Operations Centre of Deakin University. I attempted to explain that the following facts were discernible by a simple inspection that:

(1) The package consists of a large cardboard box which has Deakin University's logo and address printed on it, that the box was covered in shrink wrapped heavy plastic, and that it came via "Postage Paid" from Geelong Post Office.

(2) The package contains: 3 bound study guides of 100 pages each, a bound unit guide, assignment receipt cards, assignment dispatch instructions, two printed assignment attachment forms in self carbon triplicate, a list of the names and contact phone numbers of all the off campus students enrolled in the unit, and 3 tapes which have embedded into them "English and Scottish Ballads."

(3) I attempted to explain to Mr Craig that it would be obvious where such a large amount of material, in the format described, had come from. I could make no headway in attempting to reason with Mr Craig. The end result was the advice that because I was not going trough the Education Centre to do my studies, then the tapes would have to go via the Education Centre, where staff would listen to the tapes in order to ensure that they contained only educational material. The tapes would then be issued to me by Education Centre staff. I was also told that it would be necessary for me to give Education Centre staff permission to obtain the tapes from my property and listen to them.

I wrote a letter, dated 19 January 1998, to the manager of the Education Centre I wrote:

> Dear Mr Langenberg,
>
> **RE: Access to Deakin University Course Material**
>
> I have been advised by Mr T Craig that 3 audio tapes, which have been sent to me as part of course material from Deakin University, have been placed in my property. To gain access to these tapes I will have to give you permission to have those tapes taken from my property to the Education Centre, I then ask you to confirm that they contain educational material and then issue them to me.
>
> The reasoning for this appears to be, according to Mr Craig, that because I am not going through the Education Centre to do my studies, then the tapes have to go through the Education Centre. I will let you make your own decision as to the logic of that.
>
> I still recall that on the evening of 4 September 1997 you attended my cell in the company of Prison Officer Walsh and advised me of a "further mistake" in relation to my application for full time education and that you were no longer willing to support my application. I said, that it will be "easier to do University level studies without the assistance of the Education Centre" and you said in reply that you could "understand me thinking that." I am still disappointed with the shabby manner in which my application for full time education was handled. However, it seems that I am still reliant on your good grace if I am to be allowed to continue my off campus studies, even though I have no connection with the Education Centre.
>
> I would very much appreciate if you would cause the tapes to be issued to you from my property and then issued to me. I hope that I may be allowed to continue with my University studies.

I personally delivered this letter to the Education Centre on the morning of 20 January 1998.

On the afternoon of 28 January 1998 I received my course material for the unit *Revelations, Reasons and Beliefs in World Religions: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion.* A property receipt informed me that 7 audio tapes that were included with the other materials have been sent to my property. I wrote the following letter requesting that the Education Centre staff issue my tapes, this letter is reproduced below:

> Dear Mr Langenberg,
>
> **RE: Access to Deakin University Course Material**
>
> I refer you to my letter dated 19 January 1998 in relation to access to audio tapes which are part of my Deakin course materials. As of the time of writing I have not heard from you or any member of the Education Centre staff. I will enclose a copy of my letter of 19 January 1998 in the event that it has been lost in the works.
>
> On 28 January 1998 I received course material for ASB105 Revelations, Reasons and Beliefs in World Religions. A property receipt informed me that 7 audio tapes which were included with the other materials have been sent to my property.

I would very much appreciate if you would cause the tapes to be issued to you from my property and then issued to me.

I personally delivered this letter to the Education Centre on the morning of 29 January 1998. On 30 January 1998 at 10.30 a.m. I was advised by a member of the Unit Staff that Mr Langenberg had telephoned and left a message for me. The message was that he had requested the Staff in the Property Store to send the tapes to the Education Centre.

On 2 February 1998 at 10.30 a.m. I was advised by the Property Stores Officer, Ms Mc Namara, that I would have to complete a *Property Request Form* if my tapes were to be released to Mr Langenberg. (I attended the Federal Court on 2 February).

On 3 February 1998 I completed a *Property Request Form* which was sent to the Store on the afternoon of 3 February.

On 7 February 1998 at 1.40 p.m. I was called to the office of the Unit, issued with a Trip Pass, and instructed to attend at the Property Store. Once there Officer McNamara asked me to identify the ten tapes as being the tapes which were to be collected by Education staff. As they are the only tapes in my property this was not difficult. I was then asked to sign a property card acknowledging that the tapes had been issued to me. I asked if I was receiving the tapes then. I was told that "a member of the Education Centre staff would probably collect the tapes on 9 February" and then after being checked by them, the tapes would be given to me. I declined to sign for the receipt of property that I had not received. I was advised by Officer McNamara that in that case, the tapes would be returned by Education Centre staff and then issued to me from the Property Store some time after.

On 9 February I wrote to Mr M. Mazengarb, Unit Supervisor Eucalypt Unit, this letter is reproduced below:

Dear Mr M. Mazengarb,

RE: Access to Deakin University Course Material

I am enrolled as a full time student (off-campus) in *Literary Studies* and Comparative Studies in Art Science and Religion at Deakin University.

On 16 January I received the course materials for the *Literary Studies* Unit and a property receipt advising that 3 audio tapes, which had been enclosed with the printed material, had been placed in my property.

On 16 January I spoke with you about this matter. I again spoke to you and Mr Craig on 19 January. Later in the day you spoke with Mr Langenberg, Head of Department, Barwon Prison Education Centre about this matter.

On 28 January 1998 I received the course material for *Revelations, Reasons and Beliefs in World Religions: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. A property receipt informed me that 7 audio tapes that were included with the other material have been sent to my property. I have taken a dozen steps including 2 letters to Mr Langenberg, in an attempt to obtain the tapes, but I still have not received the tapes.

I have delayed starting my university studies for 3 weeks because I did not have all the cause material. However, not wanting to delay too much I started my studies two days ago. I am now at the stage that I need the tapes if I am to continue.

I would very much appreciate if you could ascertain when I will receive the tapes and hurry that along.

I handed this letter to Mr M. Mazengarb at 9.30 a.m. on 9 February, 1998. At 3.00 p.m. Mr Mazengarb advised me that he had seen the Security Manager and that he had spoken to the Manager of the Education Centre about the issue. I was advised that the tapes were in the Education Centre and would go back to my property after being checked.

On 10 February 1998 at 9.00 a.m. I asked Unit Supervisor Mr Mazengarb to follow up the progress of the tapes. Mr Mazengarb seemed to be taking no action so at 10.00 a.m. I asked unit officer O'Dwyer to make a telephone call to the Education Centre and speak with Mr Langenberg and ask when the tapes would be retuned to my property. Prison Officer O'Dwyer was told that Mr Langenberg was not coming into work today and because of this they could not say what was happening, but they thought that the tapes would soon be checked and retuned to my property.

On 11 February 1998 at 9.00. a.m. I asked Mr Mazengarb to establish the whereabouts of the tapes. He first telephoned the Education Centre but Mr Langenberg was not in at that stage and no other member of staff knew what was going on with the tapes. Mr Mazengarb then telephoned the property store and was advised that the tapes were there and that I could probably pick them up some time that day.

I asked Mr Mazengarb if I would need a second *Application for Possession of Personal Property* form? He suggested that I should fill out a second form. I completed a second form and I waited.

On 12 February 1998 at 8.00 a.m. I again raised the issue of my obtaining access to my educational tapes with Unit Supervisor Mr Mazengarb. Despite being advised that I would receive the tapes on 11 February I did not receive them.

On 12 February I spoke with Mr Mazengarb on a dozen occasions between 8.00 a.m. and 12 noon, I advised Mr Mazengarb that I intend to ask for access to the tapes at thirty minute intervals until I receive the tapes. It was my view that it would only be through this childish "*are we there yet*" behaviour that I will be able to make any impact upon the child like minds of the staff.

On 12 February 1998 at 11.00 a.m. I was called to the Education Centre and given course materials for the third unit I am studying this year. All printed material had previously been delivered directly to me via the mail officer.

It seems that all my educational material has to now go via the Education Centre. I very much hope that this has been a misunderstanding as the Education Centre hinders any person attempting off-campus University studies rather than helping them. (Inmates refer to Education Centre staff as "the education police").

On 12 February 1998 at 2.15 p.m. I was advised by Mr Mazengarb that he had a meeting with the Security Manager Mr Craig and that the mail officer had made a mistake in sending my latest University material via the Education Centre as it was only the audio tapes were required to be checked by education staff.

On 12 February 1998 at 2.20 p.m. I again asked Mr Mazengarb to arrange for me to have access to the audio tapes. Mr Mazengarb said that he could not call Stores Officer McNamara as she would be abusive towards him for telephoning so many times about the one issue.

I later talked Prison Officer McCreadie into telephoning the property store and asking if I could have access to the tapes today, he was told by the stores office that: "If, or when, I ever have the time to issue the tapes I will." On my request Mr Mazengarb entered my name in the Complaints/Request book to see a Governor about this matter.

On 13 February 1998 at 9.00 a.m. I again asked Mr Mazengarb to arrange for me to have access to the audio tapes. Mr Mazengarb again said that he could not call Stores Officer McNamara as she would be abusive towards him for telephoning so many times about the one issue. No other officer in the unit was prepared to make a telephone call to the property store.

On 13 February 1998 Mr T. Craig attended the Unit at 2.00 pm. I was not in the Unit at this time so my Governor's Complaint/Request was not heard.

On 14 February 1998 at 9.20 a.m. I spoke with Governor A. Walker who heard my complaint, he advised me that he would speak to the Security Manager, Mr Craig, on 16 February, in an attempt to fix the problems and have the tapes issued to me.

On 15 February 1998 at 8.25 a.m. I again asked Mr Mazengarb to arrange for me to have access to the audio tapes. Mr Mazengarb made a telephone call to the property store and was advised that I could pick up the tapes at 9.00 a.m. And this in fact happened, so after 30 days I had the tapes, if I had not pushed as hard as I did I would have never received them.

The above account was only the start of the problems I had with my university study. Such were the hassles because of staff interference that I was forced to deferred my studies in 1998.

Full time education, the second attempt

After my failure to get anywhere in 1997, I attempted in 1999 to clear some of the obstacles the were blocking my access to education. What else could I do but try again, no person in CORE management or staff seemed to have any ideas or plans for my future apart from more of the same punishments and persecutions, I took the initiative yet again. I had to do this as I am sick of wasting my time in prison industries being taught a work ethic that would not give anyone the skills to maintain employment in a sheltered workshop let alone in the real world.

In a letter dated 23 February 1999 I wrote to Mr Langenburg, the Education Centre Manager, and asked for access to the Education Centre in line with a suggestion from prison manager Mr Craig at a meeting of Barwon prison's R&A Committee. Mr Langenburg refused my application for access to the Education Centre. However, he detailed prison policy when he wrote:

> I have to advise that the prison's policy for part time access to education is that prisoners employed in the prison's industries are permitted to attend education for one full day per week. During this time the prisoner is considered to be "at work" and so will not suffer financially for attending education.

In a letter dated 7 March 1999 I wrote to Operations Manager Walker and said:

> In a letter dated 17 September 1997 to Mr Williams, the General Manager of Barwon prison, I detailed the difficulties I was experiencing with access to the Education Centre; this letter also details a series of decisions that started with, "You can start Monday as a full time student" to "You cannot start at all." I am still having difficulties.
>
> It has become difficult for me to find the time to devote to my University studies that I would like to. I would like to do a unit of study to its maximum and read as much of the suggested material as I can rather than do the minimum needed to answer essay and exam questions. I applied for three education sessions per week so I can attend the Education Centre and use that time to concentrate on my university studies, but that was refused.
>
> Mr Langenburg has written to me and explained that it is not possible to allow me to use the Education Centre during the day as a University student, but that I would have to enroll in TAFE courses for 6 weeks part time and then I would be eligible to apply for some time in the unit for my University studies, as well as having to do other TAFE courses. I do not have the time to meet all my commitments now, let alone taking on more.
>
> I ask that I be given 1 day a week to utilise for my University studies. It is my understanding that it is policy that industry workers are allowed 1 day a week education without any penalty in wages. I ask that this policy be applied in relation to allowing me the time to meet my commitments in relation to University studies. As the system stands now I am falling through the cracks because no provision is being made for me to have the time to study.

On 16 March 1999 I met with Mr Walker, we spoke about my University course, a BA with a major in Comparative Studies in Art, Science and Religion, and I asked what his thoughts were in response to my letter of 7 March in relation to my being allowed some time to devote to my University studies. Mr Walker advised me to put in an R&A form and request a day in the unit and he gave me the impression that the application would be granted.

On 16 March I submitted a form: "To have 1 day per week to devote to my ongoing University studies." I attached to this application a copy of academic references, my letter to Mr Walker and a letter from the University confirming my student status. I was told by my industry supervisor that he had given me a favourable recommendation and agreed that I be given the day off work to devote to my University studies.

On 23 March I attended an R&A meeting and my application to be allowed to have one day per week to devote to my University studies was refused. The reasoning given for refusing my application was that it is: "Policy that we mirror accepted community standards and that if a person is doing off-campus University studies on the outside they do not get time off work to do that." Of course this is at odds with the policy detailed by Mr Langenburg that 'the prisoner is considered to be at work' when attending education for one day per week.

Conclusion

I have undertaken part time University studies for 3 years and never once have Corrections done anything to assist me. I have been hindered at every single stage. I have completed more than 6 dozen TAFE courses, I have worked for years in slave labour industries, I have outstanding academic references, but prison management will do nothing but frustrate me. I wonder why is that? Perhaps those who have so little education themselves do not understand the importance and value of it.

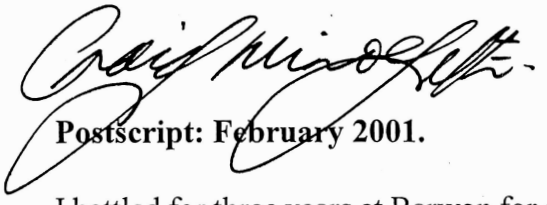
I have a right to access publically available educational programs, this is a human right which is recognised in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*. Article 26 states:

> (1) Everyone has the right to education.... Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
>
> (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups...

CORE management at Barwon prison are really not capable of doing anything other than the old lock em up and throw away the key style of warehousing. All of the rhetoric is just that, meaningless words which mean nothing to CORE managers - it's all about looking good and winning awards for how nice the gardens look rather than doing anything.

Every day of the week, every month and year I am frustrated by these type of mindless procedures. If I were to keep a diary detailing how it takes 8 weeks to see a dentist, 2 weeks to see a doctor, up to 9 weeks to be issued with replacement footwear or underwear, then I would do nothing else - just dealing with these simple issues takes many hours every week.

The trial by ordeal continues and most people just give up and do nothing with their time.



Postscript: February 2001.

I battled for three years at Barwon for a full time education position, but they would not support me. I asked Sentence Management unit, which is attached to the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, to assist me in this regard but I was told that this was a "local matter" in which they "could not interfere." It seems that Sentence Management has no say over what a prisoner does during the day, only where he or she sleeps at night, it should be called "*bums in beds management*" for all the good it does. I asked the Director of Sentence Management if she sent a person to the Bendigo Drug Treatment Prison and the staff there took a disliking to the man and refused to let him do the programs, could she force the prisons hand so the man has access to the programs, the answer was "No".

The outstanding academic references I had from Melbourne and Deakin Universities meant nothing at Barwon. However, I was transferred to Port Phillip Prison in September 1999 after taking action against the Director of Sentence management in the Federal Court. And I was given a full time education position at PPP within nine days of arrival. The management at PPP played "the ball" and not "the man" like they did at Barwon. However, it needs to be acknowledge that some people are more equal than others and I have had my needs met at PPP because management realise that it is easier to placate me than to battle me. *I would be the first to say that there should be many more education places at PPP.*

THE MASK

Each day I wake
I wear this mask
Each day I see
I see this mask

Is it real
It will not peel
Is it me
Or do I dream

So help me please
Tell me now
What do you see

The mask I wear
Is real to me
I see it even
In my dreams

You see this mask
Every day
What happens to
It in that day

Sometimes it's sad
Sometimes its gay
Most of the time
It's in dismay

So when you see
This mask of mine
Ask yourself
What's in this line

THE SHELF

There is a shelf inside of me
It's where I store my memories
I leave them there but don't forget
There with me here till time is met

My memories are strong inside
They cut me up I sit and cry
I can't forget the things I've done
To change them now it can't be done

No one knows what's inside
Upon that shelf
I have to hide within myself
I cannot lie
These memories inside my mind.

I look at me and all I see
Is an empty shell outside
But deep within the heart of me
I can but store my pride

All of us upon this world
Has a shelf all of their own
And memories that they store inside
No one really knows

Think about the shelf you have
And what is hid inside
Ask yourself can you see
What really goes around

Donna Parsons

Some more choice words from Matt Convey....

POLICE CELLS TORTURE
Awaiting transport, left to rot
in a stinking hell-hole run by cops
Bright lights shining night and day
cameras watching, your rights stripped away
POLICE CELLS TORTURE!
Putrid blankets, out of date food
No fresh air no room to move
Three fucking cushions and a concrete slab
All complaints met with batons and gas
POLICE CELL TORTURE!
Crammed into a twilight zone
For weeks on end this is your home
Your sanity you soon will doubt
You'll slash your wrists just to get out
POLICE CELLS TORTURE!

CRIME AND DOPE (Pt. Phillip '99)
Just left school, what to do?
Join the umenployment queue
Not qualified, no job insight
fill out a form each fortnight
Get paid a pittance, barely subsistent
Life becomes a bleak existence
No matter how hard you try to cope
soon you start to lose all hope
Soon you resort to crime and dope.

SCARS
searching for meaning
in the futility of life
screaming out for answers
looking for the knife....

SEEKING DONATIONS FOR
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
'Working for the Human Rights of Asylum Seekers'

We are setting up a material aid and resource center at 211 Nicholson Street Footscray that will open in late May 2001. This store will provide a wide range of free goods to asylum seekers. Everything will be FREE and run by volunteers. The reason we're setting this center up is that almost all asylum seekers live in immense poverty. Many have been denied the right to work or study by the government, have no form of income,
have no right to public housing, cannot afford English classes, no right to social security benefits and not even access to a Medicare card. Many asylum seekers do not even have enough food to eat, blankets for winter or nappies and baby food for their babies. Often they are forced to have to go from one community service to another to beg for help, which only further demoralises and traumatises them.
This center will help meet the basic living needs of asylum seekers. It's a meaningful way to ease some of the ongoing trauma and suffering they experience, whilst waiting months to years to find out whether they will be allowed to stay in Australia. Also, this center is about sending a clear message that contrary to what our government says, most of our community welcomes asylum seekers in our country.
We are seeking the donation of material goods from the community Your donation will help make a real positive difference in the lives of asylum seekers No donation is too small! We need all of the following for our material aid service

- Clothes (women, men, children and babies, in good condition).
- Blankets, pillowcases, bed sheets, doona's
- Packaged food (eg. pasta rice, beans, noodles, sauces, spices, canned food, breakfast cereals, sugar, flour, coffee, tea, vegetable and olive oil, jam, honey)
- Met tickets
- Phone cards
- Kitchenware (eg pots pans cups, plates)
- Toys, Nappies, Babyfood
- Bathroom and kitchen towels
- Soaps, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, shavers
- Sanitary pads, tampons, stockings, nail polish, lipstick
- Laundry and dishwashing detergent, toilet paper, napkins

DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT:

Grasslands Grocery and Info Shop at 205 Nicholson Street, Footscray or if you cannot come in person then call the Human Rights Centre for Mental Health on 9689 5075 to arrange for someone to pick up your donations

asylum_seeker_resource_centre@yahoo.com

Americans must die to save the planet.
ACM
Profit Privately
Political Profits
Fuck White Supremac
HE WHI USE
WASHI
Australia's position
no solution
join the fight against
US
ACM
and
Corporate greed
social catastrophe
DRUG WAR PRISONER
Time for drug decriminalisation
RISONERS OF THE
STATE
What Justice?
Despite their "tough on drugs" approach, Australian governments would prefer the status quo than decriminalising drugs. For a start, drug addiction is a means of social control.
Prisons are the ultimate repressive tool of the state and form of social control.
For a life without prison
NEWSFLASH!!!!
The police say they used non-lethal weapons, but one man reported listening to a local radio station when a man called in weeping. His wife had been attacked by the police while leaving work and she lost their child - she was 4 months pregnant. A doctor blamed the
Direct Action Gets the Goods